

## Anna Will

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**From:** Matt Rohr <mtrrohr@outlook.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 6, 2025 10:50 AM  
**To:** Planning Contact  
**Subject:** RZ25-0007

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I've spoken in front City Council before about a similar topic at another location a bit further from my home. Now, the Wal-Mart Case Ready Beef plant that I spoke to oppose has completed construction (and even though I saw an opening ceremony I rarely see any cars there). It was a true insult when the council voted to approve this project right after I spoke about the concerns. I truly hope this time there will be more compassion and thought for the citizens over the corporate attorneys that are sure to attend the August 11th public hearing.

August 6, 2025

Planning Commission  
City of Olathe  
100 E Santa Fe Street  
Olathe, KS 66061

Dear Planning Commission,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed rezoning and preliminary development plan RZ25-0007 by Lineage Inc., which seeks to establish an industrial park with an approximately 140-foot-tall ammonia-based cold storage facility at the northeast corner of 175th Street and Lone Elm Road.

When my wife and I searched for a home in south Johnson County, we fell in love with the Nottingham Creek neighborhood specifically because it was surrounded by farmland. Both of us grew up in smaller communities, and this area grounded us with its rural character while still providing convenient access to Olathe and Gardner for our daily needs. We moved here in June 2019 with the expectation that this agricultural setting would be preserved.

However, this development—along with other industrial projects Olathe has been approving—is systematically encroaching on the way of life that drew us and our neighbors to this community. These developments will have a negative impact on our home values and fundamentally alter the character of our neighborhood from the peaceful, semi-rural environment we chose to an industrialized area dominated by massive structures and heavy commercial traffic.

I am deeply concerned about the significant risks this proposal poses to our community's safety, infrastructure, and quality of life. I urge you to vote against this rezoning request for the following critical reasons:

### **Public Safety and Health Concerns**

The proposed ammonia-based cold storage facility presents serious safety hazards to our residential community. According to EPA data, facilities using 10,000 pounds or more of anhydrous ammonia must submit Risk Management Plans due to the potential for catastrophic accidents. Research shows that 72% of all reported chemical accidents in our region involve anhydrous ammonia, though 96% of these accidents are preventable through proper safety measures.

Ammonia exposure poses immediate health risks, including severe respiratory irritation, chemical burns, and at high concentrations (300-500 ppm), immediate danger to life. At concentrations above 15%, ammonia becomes explosive, creating fire and explosion risks with catastrophic consequences. With over 250+ homes located around 2,000 feet from the proposed facility, any accidental release could endanger hundreds of families, children, and visitors to the adjacent Lone Elm Park and Softball Complex.

### **Infrastructure Inadequacy**

Our local road infrastructure is not designed to handle the increased industrial traffic this facility would generate. Both 175th Street and Lone Elm Road are two-lane roads already experiencing congestion and safety issues from existing development. Lone Elm Road, in particular, is in poor condition and inadequate for the heavy truck traffic that a major cold storage facility would require.

The addition of significant industrial traffic to these already strained roads will create dangerous conditions for residents, families visiting Lone Elm Park, and emergency vehicles that may need rapid access in case of an ammonia emergency.

### **Inappropriate Zoning and Land Use**

This proposal seeks to rezone agricultural land to industrial use, placing a 140-foot-tall industrial structure in close proximity to established residential neighborhoods and recreational facilities. Such intensive industrial use is fundamentally incompatible with the character of our residential community.

The systematic conversion of farmland to industrial use represents a betrayal of the trust placed by families like mine who specifically chose this area for its agricultural character. We purchased our homes with the reasonable expectation that surrounding agricultural zoning would provide some protection from intensive industrial development. This project, combined with other recent industrial approvals, threatens to transform our peaceful, semi-rural community into an industrial corridor.

The negative impact on property values will be significant and immediate. Families who invested their life savings in homes specifically because of the rural setting and agricultural buffer will see their investments diminished by industrial encroachment, massive structures, and the inherent risks of hazardous material storage.

### **The Tax Incentive Burden Shift**

While proponents may argue that this development will benefit the city through increased tax revenue, the reality is often quite different. Property tax incentives for industrial developments frequently shift the tax burden onto homeowners and other commercial taxpayers who receive no such benefits.

Research from across the country shows that industrial tax incentives often reward companies that would have chosen the same location without tax breaks, while simultaneously increasing taxes for homeowners and reducing spending on essential public services like police, education, and infrastructure maintenance. In Cook County, Illinois, for example, commercial property owners received billions in tax reductions through appeals processes, while homeowners' tax burden increased by nearly \$2 billion.

These incentive programs can become worse than zero-sum games, where the tax base is eroded while existing taxpayers bear increased burdens to maintain necessary public services. Rather than creating genuine economic benefit, such arrangements often simply redistribute costs from new industrial users to established residents and businesses.

### **Request for Action**

I respectfully urge you to:

1. **Vote against RZ25-0007** due to the unacceptable safety risks posed to our residential community
2. **Require comprehensive safety impact studies** before considering any ammonia-based industrial facility in proximity to residential areas
3. **Evaluate infrastructure capacity** to ensure our roads can safely handle increased industrial traffic
4. **Consider the precedent** this approval would set for future industrial development in residential areas
5. **Analyze the true fiscal impact** of any tax incentives, including their effect on existing taxpayers

### **Conclusion**

The proposed industrial park with its ammonia-based cold storage facility represents an unacceptable risk to public safety, places excessive burden on inadequate infrastructure, and threatens the residential character of our community. The potential for catastrophic accidents involving ammonia, combined with the proximity to hundreds of homes and a public park, creates a level of risk that no responsible municipal government should accept.

I urge you to prioritize the safety and well-being of your constituents by voting against this proposal. The rights of existing residents to live in a safe community should take precedence over industrial development that poses significant risks and may ultimately burden taxpayers rather than benefit them.

Thank you for your consideration of these concerns. I look forward to your response and action.

Sincerely,

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